

# DOUBLE DIGRAMS

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Double digrams, such as TUTU, serENENess, or drAMAMine, are not particularly common in English words; the editor informs me that in Kucera and Francis's Computational Analysis of Present-Day American English they occur, on the average, in less than one word in a thousand in running text. This article gives a type-collection of the 54 different double digrams found in boldface entries in the Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary. It is presented in the form of a quiz for the reader. Only solid double digrams are permitted; words in which the letters are interrupted by a hyphen or a space, as in retRO-ROcket or GO-GO, don't count. At the end, the reader is invited to supply words containing double digrams not represented in the Pocket Webster, but in Webster's Second or Third. A list of double digrams known to occur in the Air Force list of Webster's Second is given, augmented by a few not there given (such as AlAl in aiaiai, or EHEH in sheheyanu).

Let's start with double digrams found in words represented at least 40 times in a million in Kucera and Francis. Can you identify Pocket Webster words containing the following seven double digrams?

EDED, EMEM, ININ, ISIS, MAMA, PAPA, TITl

And, while you are working on these, how about an ININ word that does not end in G, or an EDED word in which the double digram is not at the end?

That was much too easy. Words containing the following 28 double digrams are a little less obvious, but still should be in the active vocabulary of every Word Ways reader:

ANAN, ATAT, B1B1, BOBO, COCO, CUCU, DODO, ERER, ESES, ETET,  
lC1C, 1G1G, L1L1, LYLY, MEME, M1M1, NANA, NINI, OROR, OTOT,  
PIPI, POPO, RERE, TATA, TETE, V1V1, WAWA, YOYO

Here's a hard one. Find the only all-vowel double digram and the only all-consonant double digram in the Pocket Webster, together with the words containing these.

The rest of the Pocket Webster double digrams are in relatively unusual words; have a go at these 17 examples:

ACAC, ALAL, ASAS, CACA, DADA, HAHA, JUJU, LALA, LELE, LOLO.  
NENE, NONO, OCOC, ONON, RARA, RORO, ULUL

Surprisingly, the three examples given at the start of this article, all reasonably common words, do not appear in the Pocket

Webster. A fuller list of such double digrams:

ADAD, AHAH, AIAI, AJAJ, AMAM, APAP, ARAR, BABA, BEBE, BUBU, CECE, CHCH, CICI, DEDE, DIDI, ECEC, EHEH, ELEL, ENEN, EPEP, EYEE, FIFI, GAGA, GOGO, GUGU, HEHE, HUUH, HYHY, IAIA, IBIB, IDID, ILIL, IMIM, IPIP, IRIR, ITIT, IUIU, JAJA, JOJO, KAKA, KEKE, KIKI, KOKO, KUKU, LULU, ODOD, OGOO, OIOI, OLOL, OMOM, OPOP, OSOS, OVOV, PEPE, PHPH, PUPU, RIRI, RURU, SASA, SHSH, SISI, SOSO, SUSU, TOTO, TUTU, UCUC, UHUH, UKUK, UMUM, UNUN, UPUP, URUR, VAVA, WIWI, YAYA, YCYC, YSYS, ZIZI

### ROGET'S THESAURUS

Gale Research Company in 1988 has published for \$49.95 a facsimile copy of the original (1852) edition of Peter Mark Roget's *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, Classified and Arranged to Facilitate the Expression of Ideas and Assist in Literary Composition. Roget compiled his thesaurus in an age which held the optimistic belief that human knowledge could be logically structured. Alas, the tangle of relationships among different ideas and concepts is much more complex than the hierarchical classification he came up with. It is likely that no two lexicographers, faced with Roget's goal to systematize knowledge, would come up with classifications resembling each other except in the most general way. Because of the nonexistence of any compelling arrangement of knowledge, most of the many later editions of Roget downplayed the thesaurus and presented his information in the form of an alphabetical synonym-antonym dictionary. Still, one must admire Roget's breathtakingly comprehensive objective; historians of language will want a copy of Roget to place alongside their copies of Johnson's and Webster's original dictionaries. All are lexicographical landmarks.